

**PART V**

**HISTORICAL DIVISION**

---

**PLAIN TALES OF MOUNTAIN TRAILS**

**I. The Midland Trail**

**II. The Seneca Trail**

**By ANDREW PRICE**

**President West Virginia Historical Society**

---

**Published under the auspices of the West Virginia Historical Society,  
through the courtesy of the Editor and Compiler  
of the Blue Book**

---

**1928**

## THE WEST VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

---

At the session of 1925, the Legislature passed a bill forming the "West Virginia Historical Society," making it a corporation and body politic. The bill was known as Senate Bill No. 376. It was introduced by Hon-Dennis M. Willis, a Senator from the Eleventh District, and was enacted into law the 24th of April, going into effect ninety days from its passage.

The act as it appears in the Acts of 1925, beginning on page 254, is as follows:

AN ACT to incorporate the trustees of scenic and historic places and objects in West Virginia; preserve and publish history of West Virginia; and to provide for and keep certain property of the state.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

That there be created an organization to preserve and keep the natural scenery and historic places and objects of the state, and to preserve and publish the history of West Virginia.

Section 1. The governor shall appoint a body of fifty-five persons, each one of whom shall have been identified in some manner in the preservation of history in this state, to be selected for an indefinite term, and so that each county of the state shall have one member, to constitute a body politic and corporate under the name of the West Virginia Historical Society, which shall have the power to purchase out of money in any manner coming into its hands, receive, and hold by grant, devise, bequest, or otherwise in trust or in perpetuity, real and personal estate for the use of said corporation of a value not to exceed one million dollars. It shall also have the power to publish and preserve the written history of the state.

Section 2. Said society shall in its discretion make recommendations to counties and other municipalities as to the preservation and control of scenic and historic spots, especially as to marking such spots along the highways of the state.

Section 3. Such society shall have the power to purchase out of money in any manner coming into its hands, receive, or in any lawful manner acquire historic objects, memorable, or picturesque places in fee, or in trust, and to preserve and improve the same; *provided, however*, that admission to the public shall always be free unless otherwise expressly provided for by some subsequent act of the legislature.

Section 4. No member of such society shall have any interest in any contract in which money is to be expended by said society. Such society shall have no capital stock. It shall have no power to sell, mortgage, give away, or encumber its property.

Section 5. The officers shall consist of a president, a vice-president, six directors, and a secretary-treasurer, who shall be elected annually and hold office until their successors are chosen. No salary shall be paid to any officer or member except to the secretary-treasurer, and to him only when specifically appropriated by the legislature.

Section 6. Such society shall make reports from time to time to the legislature.

Section 7. Nothing in this act shall in anywise affect the department or bureau of archives and history or the property under its supervision and control.

Section 8. Vacancies occurring in the list of said society by death, resignation, removal from the state or otherwise, shall be filled by the governor.

## WEST VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Roll of Members Appointed by Governor Gore under Authority of an  
Act of the Legislature passed April 24, 1925

BARBOUR—Richard E. Talbott, Philippi.  
BERKELEY—C. J. Faulkner, Martinsburg.  
BOONE—H. H. Andrews, Whitesville.  
BRAXTON—John D. Sutton, Sutton.  
BROOKE—Dr. Cloyd Goodnight, Bethany.  
CABELL—Boyd Jarrell, Huntington.  
CALHOUN—A. G. Mathews, Grantsville.  
CLAY—E. G. Pierson, Clay.  
DODDRIDGE—Hugh L. Hammond, West Union.  
FAYETTE—Hon. J. Alfred Taylor, Fayetteville.  
GRANT—Arch J. Welton, Petersburg.  
GILMER—Dr. E. G. Rohrbough, Glenville.  
GREENBRIER—Miss Io Boone, Ronceverte.  
HAMPSHIRE—Robert White, Romney.  
HANCOCK—R. M. Brown, New Cumberland.  
HARDY—Miss Virginia Hopewell Wood, Moorefield.  
HARRISON—Hon. Haymond Maxwell, Clarksburg.  
JEFFERSON—Miss Ella May Turner, Shepherdstown.  
JACKSON—Sattis Simmons, Ripley.  
KANAWHA—William B. Mathews, Charleston.  
LEWIS—C. B. McWhorter, Weston.  
LINCOLN—Hon. Jacob D. Smith, Hamlin.  
LOGAN—Walter R. Thurmond, Logan.  
MARION—Mrs. Samuel Leeper, Fairmont.  
MASON—Dean Chas. E. Hogg, Point Pleasant.  
MARSHALL—James M. Rine, Glen Easton.  
MERCER—H. W. Straley, Princeton.  
MINERAL—C. N. Finnell, Keyser.  
MINGO—Mrs. M. Z. White, Williamson.  
MONONGALIA—Thos. Ray Dille, Morgantown.  
MONROE—Miss Nettie Campbell, Union.  
MORGAN—S. S. Buzzard, Berkeley Springs.  
MCDOWELL—Mrs. Luther Anderson, Welch.  
NICHOLAS—Miss Gertrude Dotson, Richwood.  
OHIO—Mrs. Julian G. Hearne, Wheeling.  
PENDLETON—H. M. Calhoun, Franklin.  
PLEASANTS—Ross Wells, St. Marys.  
POCAHONTAS—Andrew Price, Marlinton.  
PRESTON—J. C. Gibson, Kingwood.  
PUTNAM—C. A. Forth, Hurricane.  
RALEIGH—Mrs. W. H. Rardin, Beckley.  
RANDOLPH—Claude W. Maxwell, Elkins.  
RITCHIE—J. A. Wooddell, Pennsboro.  
ROANE—W. H. Bishop, Spencer.  
SUMMERS—Mrs. Princess Turner King, 805 N. Boulevard, Richmond, Va.  
TAYLOR—Harry Kunst, Grafton.  
TUCKER—Mrs. W. F. Lipscomb, Parsons.  
TYLER—Mrs. Harrison W. Smith, Middlebourne.  
UPSHUR—Hon. H. Roy Waugh, Buckhannon.  
WAYNE—Miss Jenny Crum, West Moreland.  
WEBSTER—William Waggy, Wainville.  
WETZEL—Hon. L. S. Hall, New Martinsville.  
WIRT—George W. Roberts, Elizabeth.  
WOOD—Hon. John T. Harris, Parkersburg.  
WYOMING—Mrs. Thomas Garner, Pineville.

## PART I

# THE MIDLAND TRAIL

---

The Midland trail runs east and west, from the paw-paw to the pine,  
The skyblue track on hill and dale—look at it loop and twine.  
It follows the path of the minute men of the deadly flintlock gun,  
The march that took them thirty days, you can make it in less than one.  
They found it a howling wilderness, you whirl through a smiling land,  
Where Crook fed his horses the standing crop, they greet you with waving hand.

Towns, woods, and field, by day and night, at dusk or in the dawn,  
The eager car reels off the miles with the speed of a startled fawn.  
So it is up and away, on the Height of Land, like the blue dust devils go—  
The Sedan flees like an antlered buck, and the Ford like a barren doe!

Detour!

## PREFACE

---

The Midland Trail has been a potent factor in the history of the United States. The geologist tells us that this is the oldest part of the nation since the continent rose from its last submergence. This great highway traverses this great peneplain and presents to the traveler the richest field on earth for the collector of the evidences of the upbuilding of the earth as shown by historical geology.

Here the New River breaks through the whole Appalachian range. Over this line of travel, General Andrew Lewis took his army and struck the first blow for the independence of the colonies. Here was the struggle which in the opening days of the Civil War determined the result of that appeal to arms.

When this highway was completed it was deemed proper for those who practiced the art of writing to turn to its inspiring history and to endeavor to make others feel the emotion that moved them. But we are a poor inarticulate race at the best and the efforts have not resulted in material worthy of the subject. That will have to come later. Some day a great singer will sing the song of the paw-paw and the pine.

The subject is inexhaustible. Every foot of the road furnishes a subject for a chapter. The following articles will be found to be in that strained condition that results when a poor orator has to keep one eye on his subject and the other on his reader.

ANDREW PRICE.

Marlinton, W. Va.

## CHAPTER I

*The Midland Trail over which Westward the Course of Empire took its way.*

The Midland Trail is a restless place. It is a good deal like another trail in the north called Broadway, where people hurry to and fro. It is road number 3 cutting the State into two parts, after the manner New-Kanawha River first overcame the mountain barrier. Later on the Indians marked a trail, and perhaps the Kentucky buffalo made a trip through the rugged mountains to use the grass lands of the Valley of Virginia. Then the white men made a road called the James River & Kanawha Turnpike. Then the Virginians made the noble project of building a canal across the mountains, and they would have done so, too, but for the fact that the modern invention of the steam railway decreased the economic necessity of a water way from east to west. Then the C. & O. Railway crept across the divide and took away the dividends of the stage companies and the old pike fell into disuse except for local purposes. The pike had tackled mountains on the proved proposition that a straight line is the nearest way between two points. But the railroad had its limitations and it sought the grades along the stream. The railroad fixed the status of the State, for it came at a time when the natural resources of the State, especially its coal, were needed for the upbuilding of the Nation, and great cities like Huntington and Charleston and many other fine municipalities sprang up and flourished.

Then came the day of the new kind of wheel and the world commenced to sit on rubber pneumatic cushions and sew a finer seam, and then the old trail came back.

It appears that the commission was empowered to build roads and to give these roads names. The commission found it more convenient to give them numbers to begin with, but the more important highways began to get names, and the Midland Trail was the name that was placed on the old stage road, when it was broadened and surfaced and completed over mountain, hill, and dale.

It seems to me that I have always intended to travel this pike and see the wonders that the Lord hath made, but it was not until the year of grace, 1926, when I got a roving commission to go from county to county and talk to the hard-boiled professionals that go to make up the Institutes held during the summer time of the year that I had an opportunity to travel the road, and I cannot say that I saw everything that was to be seen, for I had to do the driving and the word has been passed around that he who drives the Midland Trail must keep his eye on the road every moment of the time. So the driver gets but fleeting glances.

It is about a hundred and eighty miles across the State of West Virginia by this highway, and about a hundred miles of it lies over the highlands through a rarefied atmosphere that is very grateful in the summer time, and the week I made the pilgrimage was said to have been unusually hot for any place or time. I know that I have never suffered



from heat as I did at that time when I violated the rule to keep well above the two thousand foot contour line during the warm months.

The Seneca Trail will give even a better respite from the summer heat to the restless horde for it will afford a journey through the State of one hundred and ninety-eight miles, all of it well above the point of suffocation. These two trails will cross at Lewisburg, and the time will come when to even a greater extent than now the lowlanders will come to the uplands when the dog star rages and run their cars around in circles with glad cries.

The lowlanders have good winter climates, but we have the world beat on the upper levels in the summer time.

As most everybody else has taken a shot at the Midland Trail, I felt that I ought to be allowed to set down some of my observations.

I have read most of these rhapsodies about the Midland Trail, but they do not begin to bring home the realization of the pure delight that the presence of the woods, fields and streams bring to you.

The longer I live and the more I think about it, the more I am convinced that West Virginia, the odd State, is a magic world of its own not like any other part of the world, and I believe that I have discovered the secret hid in its mountains. In every age and in every time since history has been kept, there have been serious thinkers who tried to read the riddle of the lost island of Atlantis, or as it has been called the Islands of the Blest.

All historians sooner or later acknowledge that the only really ancient records are the stones and the record kept in the markings on the rock. Millions of years ago a drop of rain falling on a surface prepared to record it, now shows where it fell when the stone is brought in for the pile.

And so I will now drag in geology by the hair of her head and tell you something that has not been advanced before and that is that West Virginia is Atlantis. You remember the story of the man in the book. He had plenty of money and no work to do, and he devoted some years of his life to discover a specimen of that rare bird known as a man-about-town. Finally he himself got his name in the papers by reason of having got run over by a street car, and there it was stated that he was a man-about-town. All that he needed in his search was the thought to glance in a looking-glass. So it is with you West Virginians who have given the identity of Atlantis a second thought. All you needed to know about Atlantis, was to look out of the window and you would have seen the wonder land.

Let us reason together. Let us bring to the hearing pure minds, clear consciences, understanding hearts, and retentive memories, fully prepared to claim everything that will redound to the honor and glory of West Virginia.

It is written in the rock and expounded by the geologist, that once upon a time, all of the Western Hemisphere was a sea except that rising from that gray and melancholy waste was an emerald isle whose boundaries were nearly that of West Virginia of today. It was in the carboniferous age, and there was a luxuriant growth of vegetation such as is not known today. Club moss, now perhaps three inches high, grew as

tall as hemlock trees, and other things in proportion, and the great coal deposits were formed and hid away for a future time and occasion. After some millions of years, this wonderful land was changed by the action of water. At first it was a great mass of rock, but in time erosion had reduced it to a base level called a peneplain, by which is meant a plain. It was tilted and sloped to the northwest, and on close inspection it was seamed and fissured with valleys through which the water ran to the sea. At a great height it would look like a level plain, but to those who dwelt upon its surface it seemed to be rugged and mountainous and anything but a plain. But the geologist is not deceived. He knows that it is the remnant of a great rock that once towered forty or fifty thousand feet above the surface of the water, and which has weathered down to its present form, still a plain but somewhat eroded.

This is the reason that you can look in the bottom of great valleys like that of the New River and the Elk River and other rivers and see rock stratas as level as the floor on the water line and then lift your eyes and see a thousand or more feet above you the crest of a mountain, and you know that it was wholly formed, cut out, and shaped by little drops of water. Time amounts to nothing with a mountain. After the lapse of some hundred million of years—to use that as a convenient round number—the mountain isle was ready to receive and support human life of divine origin. And that it when the supermen of Atlantis came into being.

The tradition is that the commonwealth of Atlantis was the most powerful and the best governed of any country under the sun. The men were the strongest, and the women the most beautiful. Its climate was equable. Its lands rich. Its waters the most pure. Its grass the greenest. In fact, it was a blue grass country. Sailing from its shores, the men of Atlantis conquered the world, save only and excepting Athens, whose men were left to tell the tale. Everything that was desirable was to be found in Atlantis, and it was the dream of the down-trodden European to sail away to the Islands of the Blest.

Sometime when I have more time, I will go into the details concerning Atlantis, to a fuller extent, but for the present, suffice it to say, that if you would cut away the later geological upheavals to the north, east, south, and west, of the Mountain State, that you would restore Atlantis, which as every one knew in those days of the dim red dawn of man, lay west of the Pillars of Hercules, which is now called Gibraltar.

The report that Atlantis had been sunk beneath the sea was not correct. What really happened was that on every side the earth trembled, and the continent of North America rose all around about it, and the ensuing heat, confusion, and torrential rain wholly destroyed the citizens of Atlantis, and it waited for another day and time, when Europeans would turn longing eyes to the west. There is no wonder that it could not be found when the ships were built that could traverse the Atlantic Ocean. Atlantis was hundreds of miles inland.

Sometime when we have time, it would be a delightful task to trace the limits of the acreage formed by erosion, as distinguished by that formed by sediment and that formed by folded strata. Then it is that we will know the limits of Atlantis famed in song and story.



And there is no better place to see Atlantis than along the Midland Trail. The valley of the high steep sides has the right to be called the New River canyon. There is just room for the river and the railroad in the bottom, and the highway occupies a terrifying height above the awful gorge. A top of a cliff known as Hawk's Nest, is a frightful place. A walk of about two hundred feet brings you to the brink of one of the most awful precipices in the world. Not a sign of a railing or support. Keep away from the edge.

The drop is something over a thousand feet. It is almost perpendicular. It takes a good thrower to send a stone into the waters of the New River, but that seems unbelievable to those who stand on the little platform on the brink large enough to afford standing room to about six persons. A person standing there is fully convinced that he could leap into the river.

In 1812, Chief Justice John Marshall, one of the State commissioners, came to this rock, and stood upon it, and had accurate measurements made of it. At that time, in honor of the visit of the chief justice, and the interest that he took in the place, the citizens of Kanawha County changed the name from Hawk's Nest to Marshall's Pillar, but the name did not take. One hears only of Hawk's Nest.

Something over a hundred years ago a traveler from a foreign country was traveling east on the stage coach. He arrived at Kanawha Falls at midnight, where a stop of three hours was scheduled at the inn, which by the way is still standing, an immense brick mansion, the property of Mrs. C. W. Osenton. The traveler clambered out over the rock to see the falls by the light of a fading moon. Here it was that Batts and Fallam took formal possession of the Mississippi Valley for King Charles II, of England, in 1671.

The passengers were roused at three in the morning to resume their journey and the road climbed Gauley Mountain, a continuation of the Cumberland Mountains. It is ten or eleven miles to Hawk's Nest as I recall it. The stage coach made it in four hours according to this account. Approaching the spot of great reputed beauty, they pledged the coachman to stop, and from the top of the cliff on which then stood an ancient pine, the traveler seems to have gotten quite a kick.

He wondered if it were possible to gain access to the level of the river, for it looked like he might find some peace there. As far as he could tell it had never been trodden by the foot of man. That is changed now. The railroad town of Hawk's Nest is there and trains de luxe go roaring through by day and by night, and I am here to tell to the cockeyed world that I much prefer to look up at Hawk's Nest the pillar than to look down at Hawk's Nest the town.

There is little doubt that the pioneer left the bottom of the New River gorge alone. The engineers sent out from Richmond to go through the gorge at Hawk's Nest to observe its possibilities were strictly enjoined to employ one particular man who was fond of roving through it on hunting and fishing expeditions. This man refused to go because he was preparing to plant corn. Instructions then became peremptory to get him no matter at what cost. They were prepared to pay him a thousand dollars. The only contract that he would make was that he should have

the setting of the sun and he would not name it until he knew how long they would be getting through. It was so agreed and the party spent four days in the gorge, and the farmer, solely on account of having to hire hands to plant corn, demanded six dollars for the trip.

My observation is that outside of the garages and the drug stores and the hot dog stands, that tourists are not particularly welcome to the hard-working populace that inhabit the Midland Trail. In vain do the thinkers cry out to the people, "Make much of the tourist!" The citizen does not encourage conversation. At least those I tried to interest were polite but distant. I think they are fed up on strange faces. It was the hottest weather ever known outside of Hades, and it seemed to me that I was begging water with my hat in my hand all the time. And it was forthcoming, but it seemed to give no pleasure to the gracious giver. I tried tipping for water and that did not work, for I suppose that while they would like to have the money, it would not do to have it said that water was not free. It was in the dry season, and this condition will not prevail except in such a year as that and then only for a few days. I think I saw thousands of little children of school age carrying pails of water from distant springs. But I think the drought ended the day I came through on my way back, and paradise no doubt has resumed her sway in the delectable mountains.

I am glad I made that trip clear to the Ohio River on the Midland Trail, for if a gentleman can guide a car that distance over that road, meeting a car every few moments and being overhauled and passed by all kinds of craft—I say that if he can do that and still preserve his Christian integrity and the sunshine in his soul, then he ought to be able to drive on that other Broadway that follows the old calf path through New York City.

I observed a curious thing. After coming out of Charleston there came a lull in the proceedings in that while I met about thirty cars a minute, I was not overhauled for a couple of minutes. I went tooling along at a fast trot and came up to a car that was making about five miles an hour and I fell in behind it and on we went for some minutes at a fast walk. If it had not been for one thing I would have tried to pass, but so far I have not passed a single moving pleasure car. I have passed tractors and trucks, but so far each and every driver is fast enough for me. I saw the driver turn and look at me several times, and he was about fifty years old and had the eye of an eagle and the whimsical face of a kidder.

Presently other cars drew up and one of them gave a polite "Toot," which meant "damye, get over and slow down and let me by." He went by me and was going on by the front man, when that car picked up speed and kept ahead. Every now and then the speeding car would say "Toot!" Then it got to saying "Toot?" and then it ceased all sound. By and by, some twenty or thirty cars got by me and fell into line behind the two leaders, and then I got to speeding up for I wanted to see how it all came out. And another car came up. A many-colored roadster driven by a male about eighteen years old accompanied by two females still younger. With a polite salute and with a wide sweep on the margin of the road he went by me, and when he found what was up, he gave one

fell whoop and charged into the pile and by the time he had got to the head of the column he had broken the race all up. He picked them up and flung them behind one by one, for youth will be served. I have no doubt that the youngster got safely to the end of his journey in a short time and sat down to loaf.

These crowded roads are not so comfortable as they seem though the country has many millions of drivers who are far more resourceful and expert than the old time locomotive driver who was regarded with so much awe. All he could do was to keep to the rails. The common ordinary family driver, man, woman and child, must be prepared to drive a car through the eye of a needle and never scratch the paint.

I saw one aggregation of human beings and the perils of the crowded road. I came to a railroad crossing. I saw the first sign. The highway paralleled the track and crossed diagonally. Between me and the crossing was a Ford, then a boy on a bicycle, and my car. A street car whistled for the crossing. I was well to the right of the white line. The Ford in front slipped across ahead of the street car. The boy on the bicycle slowed so he barely moved, and I was barely moving well behind him. Just then a car banged into my running board, so that it was badly bended down and cost seventy-five cents to get it fixed. I never knew who hit me for the traffic flowed on in a stream for a few minutes. A dozen or more cars went by. As soon as I got across the track I stopped to see what damage had been done. A couple of walkers then came to me full of indignation. "Did you get his number?" Never had identified the car. Then the men told me what had happened. Most of us had lined up as I was giving the street car the ten seconds it needed, but one man had left the line to pass so that he could graze the tail end of the street car and get to his loafing place without delay. He passed successfully until he came to a point opposite my car. There he encountered the two pedestrians walking towards him on their right-hand side of the road, and as they refused to give in, the car driver had turned violently to the right and landed against me. The walkers were in workmen's clothes. It was about six in the evening, and I bet they belonged to the union and stood upon their rights. Envyng the lamb in the large place, I grinned and went on. There was a combination of a street car, a boy on a bicycle, a lot of motorcars, and a couple of walkers, on a busy highway at a railway crossing. I am more than ever convinced that in emergencies that if every mother's son of them will stop and freeze that nothing can happen.

Even though a tourist may be unwelcome to a man with a house by the road, I came back from a swing around in nine counties more than ever convinced that West Virginia is the show place of the world. I am tired of that Switzerland business. Switzerland is not worthy to hold a candle to Atlantis.

And when I come to think about it, I, too, live by the road and thousands go skyhooting along, and maybe they think that we are cold. Well, it is a fact, that they are on a lark, and I am at home grubbing along. I have got a notion to put up a sign "This is a friendly house. Call for water or anything else you need. Talk your blamed head off if you want to."

## CHAPTER II

*Nine Miles Lost, but it was Nine Miles off the Top of the World.  
Dunmore's War. Camp 12 was Charlestown, now Charleston.*

South by sou'west and all sail set, and a wet seat and a wandering foot, and ho for the Midland Trail! That is the country where I am going to take my pleasure pretty soon. I had known about that kind of a country for a long time. In the days when I took to the woods, I always went to the west. In that direction lay trout, and deer, and blackberries. No snakes in Erosee, at least no pizen snakes. The only time that I remember having chosen the east side of Greenbrier River as a place to camp, and having picked out a smooth place underneath some overhanging trees, a rattlesnake lifted up his head and shook his castanets at us, and we camped on the west side of the river after that sinister welcome.

Many is the month that I have roamed through the rich lands to the west and slept on the ground. Strange as it may seem, I do not count that time as lost. It now appears that it was the most sensible of the things that I did. I got to know that country of great mountains and forested valleys. I have seen from the high peaks, the dawn come up like thunder. I have heard the roar of the rivers. I have been in the shadow of the great trees. And then the time came when fate put the harness on me and I had to go to work, and I neglected the wilderness. And the timber men came to give the mountains a hair cut and messed things up considerably. But the memory of those woods was clear and the thought of the peace there has soothed me to sleep thousands of times.

The other day I had occasion to go to the southwestern part of the State and we went forth in the Ford car, and in that way we found the Midland Trail, and for something like seventy-five miles I saw the land of my dreams from the sure foundation of a boulevard. So I want to go back and take my time and jog through the country that lies between Lewisburg and the mouth of Gauley River, for that is the kind of a country that I delighted to frequent in the dear dead days now gone beyond recall.

But I must get down to my knitting and stop trying to do fine writing like a lady. I have been trying to explain the geological formation of these endless mountains, and I cannot get the stuff verified by the scientists. The trouble about them is that they lack the vision to see the land as it once was. A peneplain is to them a peneplain and it is nothing more. They cannot see the part that has disappeared, and if they could they would not dare to talk about it, for they are materialists of the most pronounced type. One of the greatest of all geologists, Dr. I. C. White, gave me the clue once when I heard him make the assertion that nearly all the mountains of West Virginia were formed by erosion. And starting from that accepted truth, I was able to build my mountains in the air. I got one other cold fact. The table lands in these parts once rose fifty thousand feet into the air. That is from a book. Starting from this true premise, I am going to make another effort to get my vision to you after the manner of the inarticulate.



A million years is but a moment in the sight of a geologist, and yet he cannot afford to have any imagination. I can wander in the realms of fancy.

And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and said let the dry land appear. Then where we now sit, surrounded by all that endears and embellishes civilized life, on the third day, there arose a great level of an oblong shape, with a flat top, ten miles above the surface of the water, slightly tilted to the northwest. That was the beginning of the western hemisphere. And the Lord said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, and that was still accomplished in the third day.

In pursuance of this command, the great flat rock began to weather down and in course of time it had lost nine miles of solids in height, and the irregular wearing away by the winds and the water had left an eroded surface consisting of mountains, hills, valleys, and plains, the whole constituting a peneplain, by which is meant a land surface reduced by erosion almost to base level, so that most of it is nearly plain. For instance you think of Elk Mountain as a great mountain, when in fact it is but a bump on the plain. And we think that we are above highwater mark and safe from the waves of the sea. Just remember that out of the ten miles that we once had that we have left less than a mile to go upon. We are down to the last mile and going fast, geologically speaking. We are nearing base level.

The washings from this great plateau formed the Mississippi Valley to a great extent. Nearly all of the fertile part. That is what the State of Mississippi owes to the State of West Virginia. Let them look to the hills from whence cometh their help.

As the great rock wore down the long water courses flowed to the west and on the east the slope was precipitate and plunged to the sea, and the surf beat upon a narrow beach just about where the Greenbrier flows today. You can go along a well defined and curving line and pick up coral and shell shapes today.

And this was the end of the fourth day. And then in the fifth period there came some animal life into the world but it was confined to the waters, with the exception, that certain aquatic forms could fly over the land and return to the waters, and that is the reason that fish, birds and reptiles are the oldest form of animal life. And on the sixth day the land animals were made, and then the earth was ready for man who was to have dominion over the creatures. That is the history of creation, especially that part of it where we live.

We do not have everything here for we have been saved from great convulsions and from volcanic fires. The muck heap to the west became the great valley, and to the east the sea pushed away several hundred miles by some bastions that were thrown up by the folding of the crust of the earth, so that instead of the bullering of the surf, we hear the murmuring of the brook.

So the Midland Trail affords a most convenient way to view the oldest part of creation.

And by the way the more I think about it, the more I am convinced that if we had more poetical geologists, that we would get a better picture of the earth as it was at the beginning.

Geologists are inclined to be too matter of fact. They rely too much upon the printed word. They are too much like the ancient witness. In Morgantown, on the banks of the Monongahela River, at the courthouse years ago they were examining an old lady who was to prove an event that happened almost beyond the memory of man. She said that she did not know what year she was born. She did not know how old she was. Then the lawyer asked her if she could not fix her age by some event that had occurred in her early childhood, for example her first visit to Morgantown. Her answer was: "I could not pretend to give my age but I am very certain that when I was a little girl and first visited Morgantown there was no river there."

That is my idea of a geologist. A person whose field work is crippled by imperfect recollections of textbooks. It is getting to be about time for a new deal. Time to burn all the geological works except the first chapter of Genesis, and to let men of the radiant radio age give us their ideas of creation and the meaning of the markings on the rocks.

But at this rate, I am going to be quite a long time getting to the Midland Trail. Midland Trail is road 3, to be succinct. The crossroads are at Lewisburg. The Midland Trail is an east and west road. The north and south road had no individual number but you cannot keep a good road down so it just grewed, and to give it entity they called it the Seneca Trail. In the confusion of the christening in the first instance, it should have been road number four, but that fell to a road that runs through the central part of the State, the great road in Braxton County.

Every since the Seneca Trail has been growing like a green bay tree, road four has been in trouble. We hold that is one of the reasons that the tribes that live on Road 4 will not let a Senator come from the Seneca country.

My home is forty-two miles north of the Midland Trail and we have to win our way over Droop Mountain and Spring Creek Mountain, and through the red McCready shale of the Little Levels, and Renicks Valley, and the Big Levels to get to the Midland Trail. If we could follow the bank of the Greenbrier River down to the Midland Trail, it would not be so bad, but we have to go over the uplands where the people live to get there.

I went down one day to add to the confusion that exists in the mind of the educated, and talked to the Institute of Greenbrier County. I thought we might be able to do something about New England having stolen all the credit that belongs to Greenbrier County as the birthplace of American independence. We did not get it fully accomplished, but I hope that we got something started.

After the lecture, and before I had come out from under the hypnosis superinduced by an effort to speak in public, a young lady professor from Frankford asked me how I secured my facts that I used in my writings about this part of the country. I was not at all clear with her, I am sure, and being a writer, rather than a speaker, I want to set down a few matters here in that connection. I am credulous by nature and am



willing to believe. I think we can sense the truth. I know women can. Do not ask me how I know that. And I go so far as to say, that if a community has no historical matters, that it is the duty of the local historian to supply them. But it is all bosh to say that a community has no history. There is material for many books in the history of every cross-roads. And I would rather be asked about specific statements anyway, for I will be only too glad to furnish detailed information as to my authority. That is one of the important things about putting your assertions in print. It is scanned by thousands, and if it stands the pitiless publicity without contradiction, it is almost established itself. Look at that statement about the burial of Washington Neff, the soldier. I had him buried on the right creek but in the wrong field, and full and complete facts were forthcoming at once from every point of the compass to set the record right.

The lady asked me about Fort Stuart or Stewart. They say that Col. Stuart signed his name both ways. Frankford lies between here and the Midland Trail in the Big Levels. It is a town first settled by Col. John Stuart in 1769, and it is the only large town that I can recall that does not have as much as a spring branch to give it the name of a ford. Ford is an Anglo-Saxon word and until the other day had but one meaning and that was where a stream can be crossed by wading. Lately it also means a pleasure carriage.

So I take it, that the name has suffered somewhat in transmission for it was a fort, and not a ford. So that is one way that a historian reasons aloud, and whether it is sound or not is for the reader to say.

The question is whether Fort Stuart was on the other side of Lewisburg or whether it was the Stuart place at Frankford. Lately I have been giving it as my opinion that it was not Frankford. Col. John Stuart had a fort at Frankford but the name of that fort was Fort Spring, a name that is given to a town in another part of Greenbrier County.

It is very hard to get documentary evidence of those days on the Western Waters. On the 2nd day of September, 1774, Col. William Fleming was in camp at the big spring at Lewisburg. He set down in his journal that day the following words: "We were alarmed by a report that Stewarts Fort, four miles from camp, was attacked by Indians."

On the first day of August, 1774, Gen. James Robertson wrote to Col. William Preston, that he had just received flying news that the Indians had shot one of Arbuckle's sentries on Muddy Creek; that John Stewart had a company in the levels of Greenbrier, "not more than six miles from Arbuckle's fort." I do not know this Midland Trail country so well, but it appears to me from my local knowledge of Muddy Creek, which is the stream that comes into the Greenbrier River near Alderson, that Stuart's Fort as depended upon by the community in 1774 was south of the Midland Trail and not at Frankford, ten miles north of the Midland Trail and much further than that from Muddy Creek.

There it is for you. That is the evidence that is convenient. We know that in 1774 there was no fort at Lewisburg. The place was chosen for the assembling of the first army to resist the power and orders of the British king in regard to settlements west of the Allegheny Mountain.

Stewart's Fort must have been the nearest fort to the big spring. The evidence that I have used in this article as to the record in the handwriting of Fleming and Robertson was gathered by the Wisconsin Historical Society which was the first to collect the old letters and journals preserved in these mountains, and which are in that western State. Wisconsin has done more to preserve our history than we have ourselves. That record refers to Frankford and as Frankfort. Their books can be consulted, and for a very reasonable sum they will send photo copies of any of the old manuscripts that they hold. The index to their manuscripts makes a large volume in itself.

Before the snow flies, I hope to have time to go to the Midland Trail and loiter along it and make a complete and satisfactory study of the way the army marched in 1774, in the current of the Revolution.

Col. Fleming, commanding the Botetourt militia, left Lewisburg on the Midland Trail, September 12, 1774, and marched seven miles crossing Muddy Creek Mountain. By constant marching his command reached the mouth of Elk River at Charleston on the evening of the 23rd day of September, having spent twelve days on the march. Here the army halted for something like a week to get canoes made. Then they marched and floated down the river to the mouth of Coal River, to a camp.

I followed him to that point, but I noticed some changes. From the camp that he calls Camp 12, to the mouth of Coal River, I found a great city, and for something like fourteen or fifteen miles, I was driving through a town. Here is a significant thing. That Camp 12 was somewhere in the upper part of Charleston, above the State House, and the countersign for the day for that camp was "Charlestown." This antedated by some years the establishment of Fort Clendenin, by George Clendenin, and Charleston was named in honor of his father, Charles Clendenin. Yet we find that the parole word for that first encampment of Americans to be "Charlestown," which was the original name given the present city. At Elk River the word was "Dunkirk." At Coal River the word was "Burke." At Point Pleasant the first day, the word was "York," second day "Cork," third day "Gooch," fourth day "Richmond." And the fifth day they got into a fight before a word could be given out.

At the mouth of Coal River, the ancient and honorable city of St. Albans, the Midland Trail swings over a mountain and keeps to the left, while the pioneer army kept on down the river towards the Point. I was not prepared to leave the line of march so I turned on down the river and followed it some twelve or fifteen miles on a broad road that leads to Winfield, the county seat of Putnam, on the banks of the Great Kanawha, where the steamboats stop. The courthouse has a bell that was salvaged from a great steamer that blew up at this point.

I had a most delightful day at Winfield concerning which I hope to write at some future time. It is a small town, with so much strength in stores, hotels, newspapers, lawyers, banks, and schools that it seems to be over-engined for its beam, but that is because it is the county seat of a great county.

I had seen about the fishing in 1774 in the army records and I made inquiry of the barber of Winfield while he was trying to make me look like an old basin freshly scoured, he knew about fishing. It is different

there from the kind I was used to, where the fish are jumping crazy for the fly or bait. It is still water and when a fisherman overcomes a big catfish they butcher it and put the choice cuts on the market and retail it out at from twenty-five cents to thirty-five cents a pound. There is a recollection of one big one that weighed eighty-two pounds gross that was peddled out to the public.

There was another case of an eighty-pound catfish. In this case the fish had taken refuge in a big hollow sunken log and it had grown so big that it could not get out of its retreat. So the log was hauled out and split open and the fish extracted.

I asked the barber if there were any notable fishes frequenting that part of the river which had not been taken. He said there certainly was one, and he had seen it. When it came to the top of the water that it made as much commotion as a horse. It could not be taken with a line. It went around trailing fishing lines from its mouth. They called it "Old Ruffner." And the taking of Old Ruffner is the thing that those boys have to look forward to.

---

### CHAPTER III

#### *Dunmore's Army on the Midland Trail. The Surveying Parties of 1774. The Dunmore Campaign the Beginning of the Revolution.*

A lady in Point Pleasant said to me that she would like me to give some authority for calling the battle of Point Pleasant the first battle of the Revolution. She had a son who lived in Washington and it seems that when he advanced that claim, the people laughed. The New England bodyguard would see to that. It has always been plain to me that the Revolution began at Lewisburg and ended at Yorktown. Began in Virginia and ended in Virginia, but great is the power of the printed word, and New England claims the beginning of the Revolution to be the battles of Lexington and Concord in April, 1775. Ridpath refers to Patrick Henry and his speech in 1765 in the House of Burgesses in Virginia in which he declared for liberty or death as the effort of an "uneducated mountaineer of Louisa County."

Roosevelt's construction is the true one. He was more than a historian. He was a history maker himself. But he is second to none as an interpreter of history. In his "Winning of the West," Part I, chapter two, "In the Current of the Revolution," he said:

"Lord Dunmore's War waged by Americans for the good of America, was the opening act in the drama whereof the closing scene was played at Yorktown. It made possible the twofold character of the Revolutionary War, wherein on the one hand the Americans won by conquest and colonization new lands for their children, and on the other wrought out their national independence of the British king."

If a West Virginian desires further verification he is hard to please.

## THE WEST VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

At the session of 1925, the Legislature passed a bill forming the "West Virginia Historical Society," making it a corporation and body politic. The bill was known as Senate Bill No. 376. It was introduced by Hon-Dennis M. Willis, a Senator from the Eleventh District, and was enacted into law the 24th of April, going into effect ninety days from its passage.

The act as it appears in the Acts of 1925, beginning on page 254, is as follows:

AN ACT to incorporate the trustees of scenic and historic places and objects in West Virginia; preserve and publish history of West Virginia; and to provide for and keep certain property of the state.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

That there be created an organization to preserve and keep the natural scenery and historic places and objects of the state, and to preserve and publish the history of West Virginia.

Section 1. The governor shall appoint a body of fifty-five persons, each one of whom shall have been identified in some manner in the preservation of history in this state, to be selected for an indefinite term, and so that each county of the state shall have one member, to constitute a body politic and corporate under the name of the West Virginia Historical Society, which shall have the power to purchase out of money in any manner coming into its hands, receive, and hold by grant, devise, bequest, or otherwise in trust or in perpetuity, real and personal estate for the use of said corporation of a value not to exceed one million dollars. It shall also have the power to publish and preserve the written history of the state.

Section 2. Said society shall in its discretion make recommendations to counties and other municipalities as to the preservation and control of scenic and historic spots, especially as to marking such spots along the highways of the state.

Section 3. Such society shall have the power to purchase out of money in any manner coming into its hands, receive, or in any lawful manner acquire historic objects, memorable, or picturesque places in fee, or in trust, and to preserve and improve the same; *provided, however*, that admission to the public shall always be free unless otherwise expressly provided for by some subsequent act of the legislature.

Section 4. No member of such society shall have any interest in any contract in which money is to be expended by said society. Such society shall have no capital stock. It shall have no power to sell, mortgage, give away, or encumber its property.

Section 5. The officers shall consist of a president, a vice-president, six directors, and a secretary-treasurer, who shall be elected annually and hold office until their successors are chosen. No salary shall be paid to any officer or member except to the secretary-treasurer, and to him only when specifically appropriated by the legislature.

Section 6. Such society shall make reports from time to time to the legislature.

Section 7. Nothing in this act shall in anywise affect the department or bureau of archives and history or the property under its supervision and control.

Section 8. Vacancies occurring in the list of said society by death, resignation, removal from the state or otherwise, shall be filled by the governor.



## WEST VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Roll of Members Appointed by Governor Gore under Authority of an  
Act of the Legislature passed April 24, 1925

BARBOUR—Richard E. Talbott, Philippi.  
BERKELEY—C. J. Faulkner, Martinsburg.  
BOONE—H. H. Andrews, Whitesville.  
BRAXTON—John D. Sutton, Sutton.  
BROOKE—Dr. Cloyd Goodnight, Bethany.  
CABELL—Boyd Jarrell, Huntington.  
CALHOUN—A. G. Mathews, Grantsville.  
CLAY—E. G. Pierson, Clay.  
DODDRIDGE—Hugh L. Hammond, West Union.  
FAYETTE—Hon. J. Alfred Taylor, Fayetteville.  
GRANT—Arch J. Welton, Petersburg.  
GILMER—Dr. E. G. Rohrbough, Glenville.  
GREENBRIER—Miss Io Boone, Ronceverte.  
HAMPSHIRE—Robert White, Romney.  
HANCOCK—R. M. Brown, New Cumberland.  
HARDY—Miss Virginia Hopewell Wood, Moorefield.  
HARRISON—Hon. Haymond Maxwell, Clarksburg.  
JEFFERSON—Miss Ella May Turner, Shepherdstown.  
JACKSON—Sattis Simmons, Ripley.  
KANAWHA—William B. Mathews, Charleston.  
LEWIS—C. B. McWhorter, Weston.  
LINCOLN—Hon. Jacob D. Smith, Hamlin.  
LOGAN—Walter R. Thurmond, Logan.  
MARION—Mrs. Samuel Leeper, Fairmont.  
MASON—Dean Chas. E. Hogg, Point Pleasant.  
MARSHALL—James M. Rine, Glen Easton.  
MERCER—H. W. Straley, Princeton.  
MINERAL—C. N. Finnell, Keyser.  
MINGO—Mrs. M. Z. White, Williamson.  
MONONGALIA—Thos. Ray Dille, Morgantown.  
MONROE—Miss Nettie Campbell, Union.  
MORGAN—S. S. Buzzard, Berkeley Springs.  
MCDOWELL—Mrs. Luther Anderson, Welch.  
NICHOLAS—Miss Gertrude Dotson, Richwood.  
OHIO—Mrs. Julian G. Hearne, Wheeling.  
PENDLETON—H. M. Calhoun, Franklin.  
PLEASANTS—Ross Wells, St. Marys.  
POCAHONTAS—Andrew Price, Marlinton.  
PRESTON—J. C. Gibson, Kingwood.  
PUTNAM—C. A. Forth, Hurricane.  
RALEIGH—Mrs. W. H. Rardin, Beckley.  
RANDOLPH—Claude W. Maxwell, Elkins.  
RITCHIE—J. A. Wooddell, Pennsboro.  
ROANE—W. H. Bishop, Spencer.  
SUMMERS—Mrs. Princess Turner King, 805 N. Boulevard, Richmond, Va.  
TAYLOR—Harry Kunst, Grafton.  
TUCKER—Mrs. W. F. Lipscomb, Parsons.  
TYLER—Mrs. Harrison W. Smith, Middlebourne.  
UPSHUR—Hon. H. Roy Waugh, Buckhannon.  
WAYNE—Miss Jenny Crum, West Moreland.  
WEBSTER—William Waggy, Wainville.  
WETZEL—Hon. L. S. Hall, New Martinsville.  
WIRT—George W. Roberts, Elizabeth.  
WOOD—Hon. John T. Harris, Parkersburg.  
WYOMING—Mrs. Thomas Garner, Pineville.